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051606Z Mar 01

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ACTION AF-00

INFO	LOG-00	NP-00	AGRE-00	AID-00	AMAD-00	ACQ-00	CIAE-00
	COME-00	INL-00	DINT-00	DODE-00	DOFE-00	SRPP-00	DS-00
	EB-00	EUR-00	FAAE-00	FBIE-00	VC-00	FRB-00	H-01
	TEDE-00	INR-00	IO-00	LAB-01	L-00	VCE-00	AC-01
	NSAE-00	OIC-02	OMB-01	OPIC-01	PA-00	PM-00	PRS-00
	ACE-00	P-00	SP-00	STR-00	TRSE-00	USIE-00	BBG-00
	PMB-00	DSCC-00	PRM-01	DRL-02	G-00	NFAT-00	SAS-00

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FM AMEMBASSY HARARE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8354
INFO NSC WASHDC
SOUTHERN AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY
AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 HARARE 000919

SIPDIS

NSC FOR SENIOR AFRICA DIRECTOR JFRAZER
LONDON FOR CGURNEY
PARIS FOR B WILLIAMS
NAIROBI FOR PFLAUMER
PASS USAID FOR AFR/SD - DWELLER, AFR/SA - CPALMA,
NNEWMAN, AA/AFR - VDICKSON-HORTON

E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/05/11
TAGS: PHUM EAGR PGOV EAD PNR
SUBJECT: SEVENTY-TWO YEAR OLD FEMALE COMMERCIAL FARMER
KILLED AMBUSH STYLE IN ZIMBABWE

REFS: A. HARARE 898, HARARE 815, C. 00 HARARE 7065,

1D. 00 HARARE 7013

CLASSIFIED BY CHARGE D' AFFAIRES EARL M. IRVING FOR
REASONS 1.5 (B/D).

SUMMARY

1. (C) ON MARCH 4, A 72-YEAR-OLD WHITE FEMALE COMMERCIAL FARMER, GLORIA OLDS, WAS BRUTALLY AND VICIOUSLY ASSASSINATED BY AUTOMATIC WEAPONS FIRE IN AN AMBUSH ON HER FARM. HER SON MARTIN WAS KILLED BY "WAR VETS" ON HIS FARM, WHICH WAS NEXT TO GLORIA'S, LAST APRIL AND NO ONE HAS YET BEEN ARRESTED. THE POLICE CLAIM THAT OLDS APPEARED TO BE KILLED IN THE COURSE OF A VEHICLE ROBBERY ON HER FARM. THE CFU REGIONAL PRESIDENT, MAC CRAWFORD, DISPUTES THE POLICE THEORY, STATING THAT OLDS WAS SHOT MULTIPLE TIMES WITH AUTOMATIC RIFLES, THE LAST FEW SHOTS DONE AT CLOSE RANGE. CRAWFORD SPECULATES THAT OLDS WAS MURDERED IN COLD BLOOD IN ORDER TO FURTHER INTIMIDATE ZIMBABWE'S WHITE COMMERCIAL FARMERS. END SUMMARY.

SEVENTY-TWO YEAR OLD FARMER BRUTALLY MURDERED

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2. (C) BOTH THE GOVERNMENT-CONTROLLED AND INDEPENDENT PRESS REPORTED IN THEIR MARCH 5 EDITIONS THAT ON MARCH 4, GLORIA OLDS, A 72-YEAR-OLD FEMALE WHITE COMMERCIAL FARMER, WAS KILLED AMBUSH STYLE AS SHE WAS APPROACHING THE SECURITY GATE TO HER FARM, LOCATED NEAR THE TOWN OF NYAMANDLOVU, ABOUT ONE HOUR BY ROAD NORTHWEST OF BULAWAYO. THE PRESS REPORTS SPECULATED THAT OLDS WAS KILLED AT 6:30 A.M., SINCE THIS IS WHEN SHE REGULARLY OPENED THE SECURITY GATES TO HER FARM. HER BODY WAS DISCOVERED BY HER SON DAVID, WHO WENT TO THE FARM AT 9 A.M., AFTER FAILING TO REACH HIS MOTHER BY PHONE. GLORIA OLDS WAS THE MOTHER OF COMMERCIAL FARMER MARTIN OLDS, WHO WAS KILLED ON HIS FARM BY "WAR VETS" LAST APRIL 18, ZIMBABWE'S INDEPENDENCE DAY. A PICK-UP TRUCK BELONGING TO GLORIA OLDS WAS TAKEN BY THE ASSASSINS AFTER SHE WAS KILLED, LEADING THE POLICE TO SPECULATE THAT ROBBERY WAS THE MOTIVE BEHIND HER KILLING. HOWEVER, COMMERCIAL FARMERS UNION (CFU) OFFICIALS DISPUTE THIS THEORY, STATING THAT MONEY AND OTHER VALUABLES WERE NOT TAKEN FROM GLORIA OLDS' FARMHOUSE, EVEN THOUGH THERE IS EVIDENCE THAT THEY ENTERED THE FARMHOUSE TO GET THE KEYS TO THE PICK-UP.

KILLING WAS A COLD-BLOODED AMBUSH

13. (C) ON MARCH 5, ECONOFF SPOKE WITH MAC CRAWFORD, PRESIDENT OF THE MATABELELAND REGION OF THE CFU, REGARDING THE KILLING OF GLORIA OLDS (OLDS' FARM IS LOCATED IN MATABELELAND NORTH.) CRAWFORD STATED THAT
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THE KILLING OF OLDS WAS AN AMBUSH-STYLE ASSASSINATION, SIMILAR TO THAT OF ANOTHER WHITE FARMER, HENRY ELSWORTH (REFS C AND D), LAST DECEMBER. ACCORDING TO CRAWFORD, OLDS WOULD GO OUT AND OPEN THE SECURITY GATE TO HER FARM EACH DAY AT 6:30 A.M. THE PHYSICAL EVIDENCE AT THE SCENE OF THE KILLING INDICATES THAT OLDS WAS ABOUT A METER FROM THE GATE, WHEN SHE WAS FIRST SHOT. SHE THEN TURNED, BLEEDING, IN AN ATTEMPT TO RETURN TO HER FARMHOUSE. SHE WAS THEN SHOT AGAIN. THE ASSAILANTS THEN SHOT THE LOCK OFF THE SECURITY GATE, SHOT THREE OF OLDS' DOGS, AND THEN APPROACHED OLDS' BODY. HOVERING OVER HER, THEY SHOT HER A FEW MORE TIMES AT CLOSE RANGE. CRAWFORD SAID THAT FIFTEEN SPENT BLACK AND GOLD CARTRIDGES FROM AK-47 RIFLES WERE FOUND AT THE SCENE OF THE CRIME, INDICATING THAT AT LEAST TWO DIFFERENT WEAPONS MAY HAVE BEEN USED. CRAWFORD ADDED THAT THE CARTRIDGES WERE NEW, AS IF THEY HAD JUST COME OUT OF AN ARMORY. WHEN ECONOFF ASKED HOW HE WAS SURE THAT THE WEAPONS USED WERE AK-47S, AND THAT THE CARTRIDGES WERE FROM TWO GUNS AND WERE NEW, CRAWFORD STATED THAT HE HAD BEEN IN THE MILITARY, AND HE WAS FAMILIAR WITH SUCH WEAPONRY.

ROBBERY: A POSSIBLE MOTIVE

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-----CDCC4A 051619Z /38

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FM AMEMBASSY HARARE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8355
INFO NSC WASHDC
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AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 03 HARARE 000919

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14. (C) CRAWFORD DISPUTES THE POLICE THEORY THAT OLDS' KILLING WAS THE RESULT OF A ROBBERY. WHILE HER TOYOTA HILUX 4X4 WAS TAKEN BY THE KILLERS, THEY DID NOT STEAL OTHER VALUABLES FROM THE FARMHOUSE. THE KILLERS ENTERED OLDS' FARMHOUSE, AND TOOK HER PURSE CONTAINING THE PICK-UP KEYS, AS WELL AS SOME CHILDRENS' CLOTHES FROM A CLOSET. HOWEVER, THEY DID NOT TAKE A PILE OF CASH THAT WAS SITTING ON THE KITCHEN TABLE, MADE NO EFFORT TO OPEN A SAFE THAT HAD THE KEYS IN THE DOOR, TOOK NONE OF THE WEAPONS THAT OLDS KEPT IN HER BEDROOM, OR APPARENTLY ANY OTHER VALUABLES. WHEN ASKED WHAT OTHER MOTIVE THERE MIGHT BE FOR HER KILLING, CRAWFORD STATED THAT OLDS WAS IN THE PROCESS OF EVICTING A FEMALE SHOPKEEPER WHO FAILED TO PAY RENT FROM A BUILDING SHE OWNED. THE SHOPKEEPER'S HUSBAND IS A FORMER ZIMBABWE PEOPLES REVOLUTIONARY ARMY (ZIPRA) FIGHTER FROM THE INDEPENDENCE

STRUGGLE. THERE HAD RECENTLY BEEN A DEMONSTRATION IN NYMANDLOVU BY THE AFFIRMATIVE ACTION GROUP (AAG), A PRO-ZANU-PF CIVIL SOCIETY GROUP THAT ARGUES FOR GEATER BLACK OWNERSHIP OF COMPANIES, DIRECTED AGANST OLDS BECAUSE OF THE SHOPKEEPER'S PLIGHT. HOEVER, CRAWFORD DID NOT BELIEVE THAT THIS SITUATIO WOULD HAVE LED ANYONE TO BRUTALLY GUN DOWN MRS.OLDS IN COLD BLOOD AT HER FARM.

OR: INTIMIDATION

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15. (C)CRAWFORD SPECULATED THAT GLORIA OLDS WAS KILLED O SEND A SIGNAL TO THE WHITE COMMERCIAL FARMING CMMUNITY. HE BELIEVED THAT THE MURDER OF A 72-YEAROLD FEMALE WIDOW WAS MEANT TO SHOW THAT EVEN ELDRLY OR FEMALE FARMERS ARE NOT SAFE ON THEIR FARC. CRAWFORD ALSO BELIEVED THAT OLDS WAS SINGLED UT FOR ASSASSINATION BECAUSE SHE WAS THE MOTHER O MARTIN OLDS. HER KILLING WOULD RE-IGNITE IN THEMINDS OF WHITE FARMERS THE KILLINGS AND VIOLENCETHAT PREVAILED IN THE PARLIAMENTARY ELECTION PEROD. CRAWFORD LINKED THIS KILLING TO THE UPCOMIN PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION AND GOVERNMENT PRESS-TOUTE DIVISIONS WITHIN THE CFU (REFS A AND B).

16. C) ZANU-PF HAS BEGUN A CAMPAIGN BY "WAR VETS" IN MATABELELAND, A STRONGHOLD OF THE OPPOSITION MOVEMNT FOR DEMOCRATIC CHANGE (MDC), TO INTIMIDATE MD SUPPORTERS. AS PART OF THIS CAMPAIGN, A GROUP O 15 TO 20 "WAR VETS" HAS BEEN GOING RECENTLY FRO FARM TO FARM BEATING UP FARM WORKERS AND THREATNING FARMERS SO THAT THEY DO NOT SUPPORT THE MDC IN THE UPCOMING PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION. CRAWFORD ADDED THAT THE MATABELELAND REGION OF THE CFU WAS ONE OF THE MOST UNITED REGIONS IN ITS SUPPORT FOR THE CFU EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP AND ITS STRATEGY OF CHALLENGING THE GOZ "FAST-TRACK" RESETTLEMENT PROGRAM THOUGH THE COURTS. AT THE RECENT CFU COUNCIL MEETING IN HARARE, CRAWFORD REVEALED THAT IT WAS THE MATABELELAND REGION OF THE CFU THAT UNITED THE COUNCIL BEHIND THE EMBATTLED CFU EXECUTIVE, AND WARDED
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OFF THE CHALLENGE OF NICK SWANEPOEL AND OTHER RENEGADE CFU MEMBERS (REF A). CRAWFORD WAS ADAMANT THAT IT IS FOR THESE REASONS, AND NOT A SIMPLE ROBBERY, THAT GLORIA OLDS WAS BRUTALLY KILLED.

COMMENT

17. (C) WE ARE VERY SKEPTICAL THAT GLORIA OLDS WAS KILLED IN THE COURSE OF A ROBBERY. ONE DOES NOT NEED TO SHOOT A 72-YEAR-OLD UNARMED GRANDMOTHER MULTIPLE TIMES WITH AUTOMATIC RIFLES IN ORDER TO TAKE HER VEHICLE. WE SIMILARLY DOUBT THAT SHE WAS MURDERED AS A RESULT OF THE COURT PROCEEDING TO EVICT THE SHOPKEEPER FROM A BUILDING SHE OWNED. WHAT WE DO FIND CREDIBLE IS THAT SHE WAS KILLED, IN A BRUTAL AND COLD-BLOODED MANNER, IN ORDER TO SOW FURTHER FEAR IN THE WHITE COMMERCIAL FARMING COMMUNITY. THIS COULD INCLUDE THE GOAL OF CAUSING MORE FARMERS TO ABANDON THEIR FARMS AND LEAVE ZIMBABWE OUT OF FEAR FOR THEIR LIVES AND FAMILY'S SAFETY. IT COULD ALSO AIM TO CREATE FURTHER DIVIDES IN THE CFU, LEADING TO ITS ULTIMATE BREAK-UP. ONE THING THAT WE ARE FAIRLY SURE OF IS THAT THIS KILLING WILL JOIN THE LIST OF THE OTHER SIX MURDERED WHITE COMMERCIAL FARMERS WHOSE KILLERS HAVE NEVER BEEN APPREHENDED OR PROSECUTED SINCE THE FARM

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SUBJECT: SEVENTY-TWO YEAR OLD FEMALE COMMERCIAL FARMER
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VIOLENCE BEGAN IN FEBRUARY 2000. END COMMENT.

IRVING

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